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SELF

PROTECTION

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Facts

- Every minute 1.3 adult women are sexually assaulted.
- Incidents of sexual assault are not reported to police 84 percent of the time.
- One in three females will be sexually assaulted by age 18.
- One in six males will be sexually assaulted by age 18.
- Sexual assault victims know their offender 85 percent of the time; 17 to 24-year-old assault victims know the offender 95 percent of the time.
- A large majority of child sexual assault cases are not reported.
- Every 15 seconds a woman is beaten in the United States.
- Domestic violence results in more injuries that require medical attention than rapes, accidents, and muggings combined.
- Two in five women who are murdered are killed by husbands.
- At least 95 percent of all partner abuse cases involve a man beating a woman.

(Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault)

Your best defense against attack is awareness. You are capable of protecting yourself — do not present yourself as a victim. The profile of a victim is one who is easily distracted, easily intimidated, lacks self-confidence, and is over trusting. **Remain alert and aware of your surroundings.**



Personal Security

- Walk only on well-lit and well-traveled streets. Avoid parks, dark parking lots, and construction areas after dark.
- Walk near the curb rather than near buildings, alleys, or shrubbery.
- Always have your keys in hand before exiting a building, going to your car, or when entering your home. If you see something suspicious, walk back into the building, and do not enter your home
- If you believe someone is following you, turn around and look. If you are in danger, be prepared to deal with it.
- If you become threatened by someone in a car while walking, run in the opposite direction. In the time it takes the car to turn around, you can be gone.
- Keep your head up and be aware of your surroundings at all times. This includes while talking on a pay phone, waiting for a bus, reading a map, etc.
- Do not approach a vehicle if asked for directions or information. Stand back if you decide to assist the person.



When Driving

- To prevent carjacking, lock all doors and keep the windows closed when driving or waiting in a vehicle.
- When stopped in traffic, leave enough space between your car and the car ahead of you — far enough away so you can see the pavement behind the tires of the car in front of you.
- When traveling through high crime areas, take expressways, if available, rather than secluded streets.
- If you are being followed by another car, do not drive home. Drive to a police, fire, or gas station, or any other well-lit area. Remember, your horn is a good alarm.
- If another driver bumps your vehicle, do not stop. Attempt to get the vehicle's license plate number and report it immediately to the police. Drive to a well-traveled area to inspect any damage.
- If you are stopped by law enforcement and question the authenticity of the stop, slow down, turn on your flashers, and proceed to the first available, well-lit populated area.
- Cellular phones can be useful in emergency situations. Always use caution when driving and attempting to use a phone.
- Take a cellular phone in case of mechanical car failure and stay with the car. If a stranger offers help, ask that person to contact the police. **NEVER GET IN A STRANGER'S VEHICLE.**

- Do not let people distract you at intersections. This could be a ploy to divert your attention away from your immediate surroundings.



Home Security

- Assess your residence and surrounding area when returning home. Do not allow anyone to follow you into a building. Don't assume that a person holding a key is a resident of the building.
- If you find evidence that an intruder has entered your home, **DO NOT ENTER**. Call police immediately from a nearby residence or business.
- Use strong locks and chain locks on every door of your home. Install peepholes on windowless doors.
- Never open the door until you know who is on the other side. Repair or delivery persons can be identified by identification cards or by calling their place of employment.
- If someone enters your home uninvited, either a stranger or an acquaintance, leave the residence immediately.
- If you are hesitant about entering an elevator with a stranger, wait for the next one. When inside the elevator, stand close to the control panel and know where the alarm is located.
- Do not give personal information to strangers over the phone, or let the caller know that you are home alone.

- Do not put your first name on a mailbox or in a telephone directory. Use your first name initial.



Confrontation

If you are confronted, consider all your options. Fighting for your safety may be necessary.

- Attempt to talk your way out of the situation. Stay calm.
- Remember that screaming may be just as important to your defense as any weapon. If you opt to scream, yell, "Fire!"
- Carry articles that make useful defense weapons such as pens, pencils, or keys.
- Before carrying a defense spray, know how it works and practice using it.
- Concentrate on the eyes, ears, nose, and throat when combating an assailant. Movements should be made with all your strength and should be straight jabs.
- Falling limp, faking a heart attack or a seizure, or acting crazy may deter an assailant.
- Use of a firearm to protect yourself or property is not recommended.

If you become a victim of a sexual assault these guidelines should be followed.

- Do not remove anything from the scene of an attack.
- Do not wash or douche, and do not change or throw away your clothes.
- Notify law enforcement immediately. Provide all details of the attack, however intimate, and anything unusual you may have noticed about the attacker. Show police any external bruises or injuries, however minor, resulting from the attack.
- Go to the nearest hospital and request an examination and the services of a sexual assault advocate. Inform the doctor of the exact acts committed upon you and have the doctor note any medical evidence of them.
- Sexual assault counseling services can help you cope with thoughts and fears. Seek help. This includes victims who are attacked but not sexually assaulted.

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To schedule a Self Protection program, or any other safety presentation, please contact the Safety Education Unit at (217) 524-2525 or the nearest Illinois State Police headquarters.

Illinois State Police Headquarters

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District 2 Elgin	847/931-2405
777 South State Street, 60123-7689	
District Chicago	847/294-4400
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